



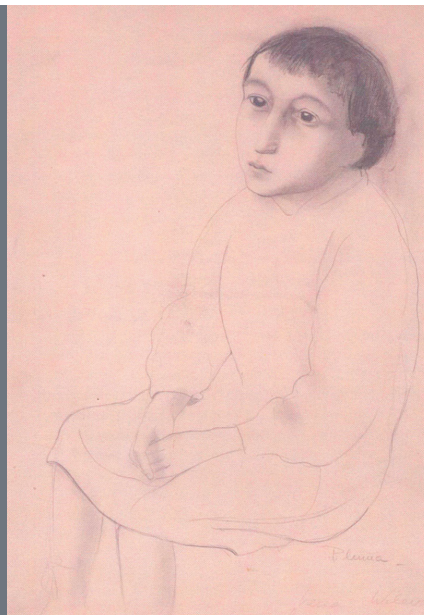
Mother and Child, Iran
c.1948
Pencil and watercolor
on paper
(20" x 14")

The United States Diplomacy Center

Dedicated to increasing public awareness of diplomacy and the work of the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Diplomacy Center, Bureau of Public Affairs produces exhibitions and organizes conferences and educational programs. Currently a center is under development with interactive displays designed to stimulate learning about American Diplomacy and help prepare youth for the global challenges of tomorrow.

The Diplomacy Center is honored to present the evocative story of Irena Wiley through an exhibition of selected works. While her husband conducted formal diplomacy through official channels, she used her position as the spouse of a diplomat to undertake her own kind of diplomacy; her art and her personality opening channels of communication and establishing relationships with diverse people. Today her portraits continue her diplomacy of artistic expression, for her works bring together the varied backgrounds of the artist, the country or culture of the sitter and the viewer, providing a common point of discussion and appreciation years after she applied her ink to paper.

Irena Wiley's artistic gifts are a reminder that each person involved in diplomacy has gifts to offer. Writing, analyzing, listening, music and humor can contribute to enriching diplomatic exchanges whether at official government levels or everyday encounters.



Bluma
c.1938
Pencil on paper
(14 1/2" x 10")

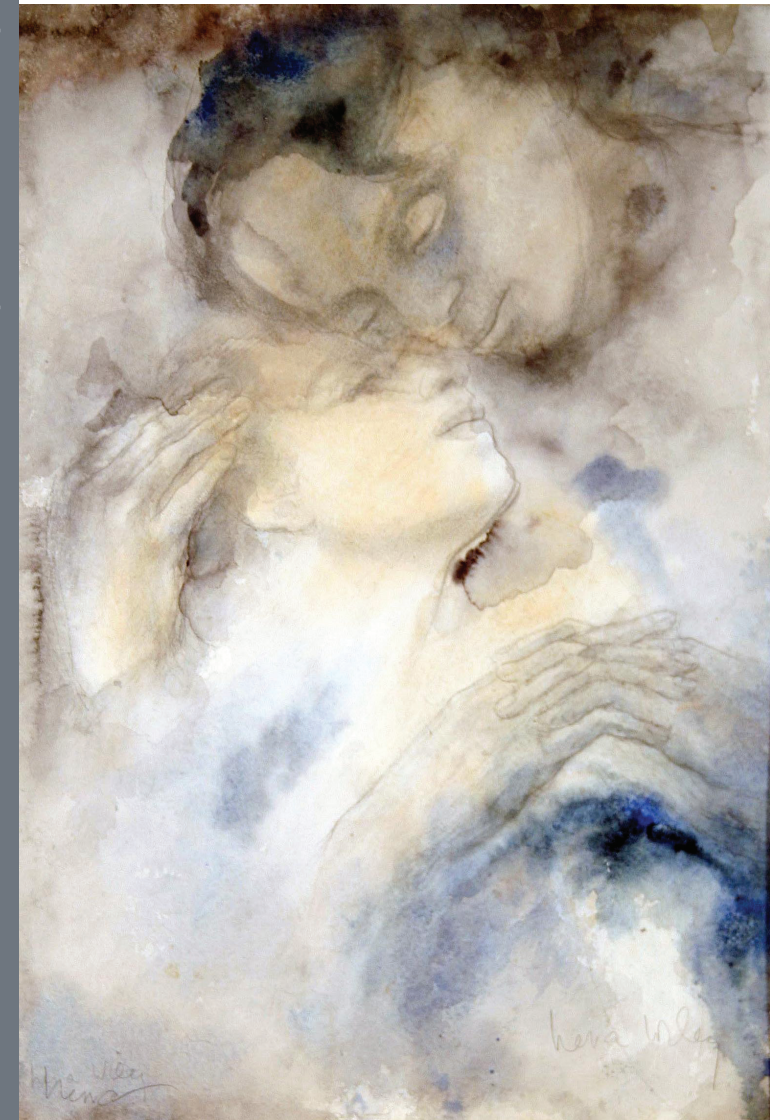
Front cover:
Embrace
Date unknown
Pencil and watercolor
on paper (20" x 14")

Exhibition organized by:
Gold Leaf Studios
202.833.2440
www.goldleafstudios.com

With special thanks to:
Art & Mirror Hanging
301.515.7333
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for installation, and

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for specialty mats.

IRENA BARUCH WILEY (1906-1972)



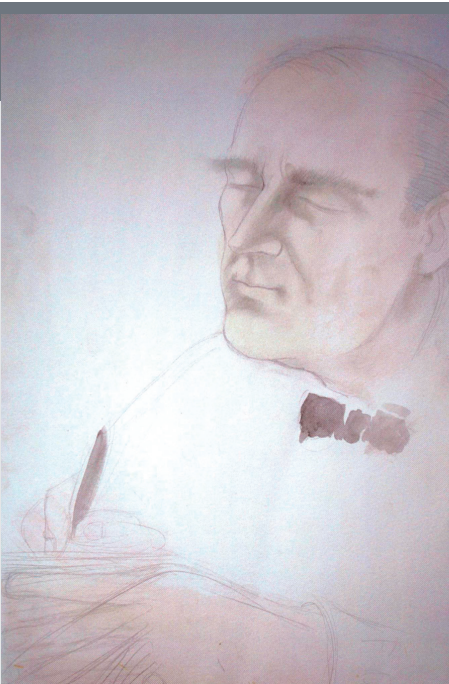
AN ARTIST AT LARGE IN THE DIPLOMATIC WORLD

24 November – 31 December 2008

United States Diplomacy Center
Bureau of Public Affairs
U.S. Department of State
<http://diplomacy.state.gov>



Majeed Bakhtiari,
Tribal chief of the Bakhtiari
tribe from Western Iran
c.1951
Pencil and watercolor
on paper (26 1/2" x 20")



Study for portrait
of Franklin D. Roosevelt
(1882 – 1945)
c.1944
Pencil and watercolor
on paper (20" x 14")

TIMELINE

- 1906** Irena Baruch born in Lodz, Poland.
- 1925-33** Irena studies fine art in Warsaw, London and Vienna.
- 1934** Irena marries U.S. diplomat John Cooper Wiley in Toulon, France.
- 1934-36** John serves as Counselor and Consul General U.S. Embassy Moscow.
- 1936** Irena travels to the U.S. for the first time.
- 1936-37** John serves as Consul General to Belgium.
- 1937-38** John serves as Chargé d’Affaires ad interim, Consul General, U.S. Legation Vienna. Nazi Germany annexes Austria in 1938; John Wiley closes Legation.
- 1938-40** John serves as Envoy Extraordinary U.S. Embassies Riga and Tallinn. Russia occupies the Baltics in 1940.
- 1939** John F. Kennedy visits the Wileys in Estonia; Irena carves an altarpiece with his face as an angel.
- 1939** Irena becomes a U.S. citizen, sworn in by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.
- 1940** Wileys leave the Baltic States via Siberia and China. En route Irena meets Teilhard de Chardin who entrusts her with his manuscript of *The Phenomenon of Man* to carry to the U.S.
- 1941-44** Wileys remain in Washington, D.C. during the war. Irena runs art therapy sessions in Forest Glen, an adjunct to Walter Reed Hospital for soldiers.
- 1943** Irena is photographed for a spread in *Vogue Magazine*.
- 1944** Irena completes a portrait of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, now hanging in Hyde Park, NY.
- 1944-47** John serves as Ambassador U.S. Embassy Bogota.
- 1947** Alice Acheson, wife of Dean Acheson, shows art with Irena at the Wildenstein Gallery, New York City
- 1947-48** John serves as Ambassador U.S. Embassy Lisbon.
- 1948-51** John serves as Ambassador U.S. Embassy Tehran.
- 1951-53** John serves as Ambassador U.S. Embassy Panama City.
- 1954** John retires, Wileys settle in Washington, D.C.
- 1962** Irena publishes her memoirs, *Around the Globe in Twenty Years*.
- 1967** John dies February 3rd in Washington, D.C.
- 1968-70** Irena takes three USO-sponsored trips to Japan, Okinawa, Hawaii and Guam where she sketches injured soldiers.
- 1972** Irena dies April 24th in Washington, D.C.

AN ARTIST AT LARGE IN THE DIPLOMATIC WORLD

IRENA BARUCH WILEY (1906 – 1972)

Irena Baruch Wiley was a Polish-American artist, sculptress and portrait painter who lived a remarkable diplomatic life with her husband, Ambassador John Cooper Wiley. This exhibition presents a selection of her portraits from the 1930s to the early 1950s.

Ambassador Wiley’s career spanned nearly three decades and carried them to diverse postings around the globe including the first U.S. Embassy in Moscow (1934-1936), Vienna during Hitler’s Anschluss (1937-1938) and Estonia and Latvia during the Soviet takeover (1938-1940). John Wiley was also Ambassador at U.S. Embassies in Bogota, Lisbon, Tehran and Panama City.

During their European postings leading up to and during the Second World War, John and Irena were able to help many people escape the atrocities of war. Letters from individuals requesting aid from the Wileys are poignant reminders of the horrific struggles faced at that time. John Wiley received written recognition for his humanitarian service in the 1938 *Congressional Record*.

Wiley’s portraits are a visual record of the diverse people she encountered wherever she lived. The drawings include many notable figures including President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the last Shah of Iran and his twin sister, Princess Ashraf; Malek Mansur, an Iranian tribal chief; Otto von Habsburg and Teilhard de Chardin, philosopher and author of *The Phenomenon of Man*.

Her sculptures include a twelve panel altar of St. Therese, of particular interest because a young John F. Kennedy posed for one of the angels in the relief when he was visiting the Wileys in Latvia in 1939.

After the couple retired in 1954, Irena published *Around the Globe in Twenty Years* in 1962, a memoir of her diplomatic life, which received significant press coverage.

In the late 1960s Irena Wiley made three USO-sponsored trips to countries including Vietnam, Japan, Guam and the Philippines to draw wounded U.S. soldiers who then kept their portraits. Irena died in 1972 in Washington D.C.

*Exhibition organized
and loaned by
Gold Leaf Studios,
Washington, DC
www.goldleafstudios.com*

*Presented at the
U.S. Department of State
by the U.S. Diplomacy Center,
Bureau of Public Affairs
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